

of the civility, and he fancied the movement was that of one not altogether unknown to him.

"Now, sir, I am at your service," said the *commissionnaire*, after having secured the two sets of jewels. "You have some little *bijou* for me—a watch, I presume, eh!" And he glanced at the chain, which was appended to some ornament in Dormer's waistcoat pocket.

Dormer could have knocked the fellow down for his familiarity of address; he, however, felt the necessity for prudence, and replied carelessly,

"You are mistaken; I have no watch for you, but a valuable set of diamonds."

"What! diamonds again!" exclaimed the *commissionnaire*, while his low laugh rung throughout the room, "there is no end to these—all my customers are diamond people. Are yours false, too?"

"Judge for yourself," replied Dormer, the blood rising to his face with the indignation he was compelled to check. "I want fifty thousand francs upon these," he pursued, handing him the somewhat ponderous case.

The man immediately dropped his facetious manner, and stared, with unaffected astonishment at the demand; and, in truth, Dormer had only named that amount under the impression that his price would be diminished at least one half. He had, however, no sooner opened the case, than, struck with the brilliancy and rich setting of the diamonds, he could not refrain from exclaiming in favour of their extreme beauty and value. His only doubt seemed to be in regard to the just claims to possession of the person by whom they were offered. The quick eye of a *commissionnaire du Mont de Piété*, like that of a bailiff, seldom fails to recognise its victims. A scrutinizing glance now satisfied the fellow that the Englishman had often visited him on previous occasions, but as far as his recollection served him, with trinkets of far less value. "How," he thought, "has he become possessed of these?" then fixing his pene-